



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5

77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD

CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

SEP 13 2010

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

Philip Forst
Environmental Engineer
Federal Highway Administration
Galtier Plaza, Suite 500
380 Jackson Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

RE: Trunk Highway 371 North Improvement Project Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement, Cass and Crow Wing Counties, Minnesota, CEQ #20100307

Dear Mr. Forst:

In accordance with United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, we have reviewed the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) regarding the Trunk Highway 371 Project in Cass and Crow Wing Counties, Minnesota.

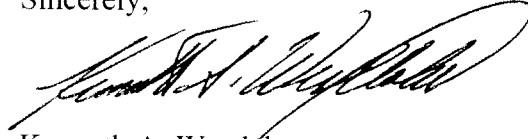
EPA has been a participatory agency in this project from early scoping through the draft and final Environmental Impact Statements (DEIS and FEIS respectively) and made comment on the draft Supplemental FEIS (SFEIS) on November 18, 2009.

The present SFEIS presents a new alignment for the 3 Modified (3 MOD) Alternative by moving the Pequot Lakes Bypass approximately 1.5 miles south. The southern departure from existing right-of-way (ROW) onto a new by-pass alignment occurs 1.5 miles south of the previously proposed intersection, and likewise the northern return to existing Trunk Highway 371 ROW will occur 1.5 miles south of the previously proposed intersection. This avoided several impacts and reduced wetland, floodplain and forest impacts, consistent with our comments. We note that the wetlands table in the SFEIS body, now Table 18, is consistent with the modified tables in Appendix O, and most impacts are to low quality wetlands.

Based upon these observations, we commend the efforts to reduce environmental impacts and improve the document.

We appreciate the opportunity to again review and comment on this Trunk Highway 371 Project. Should you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact me or my staff member Norm West at 312 – 353 – 5692 or west.norman@epa.gov .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kenneth A. Westlake', written in a cursive style.

Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Cc: James Hallgren, Project Manager
Minnesota Department of Transportation, District 3
7694 Industrial Park Road
Baxter, Minnesota 56425